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REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the telephone interview of July 21, 2008 in which proposed claim amendments were discussed. The Applicant amended the claims to include language and limitations further defining the orientation of the inlaid cavity and the sign plate with respect to each other.

Claims 10, 15, 19 and 20 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 102, as being anticipated by Robinson et al. United States Patent No. 6,843,010 (hereinafter "Robinson '010"). The Applicant acknowledges and respectfully traverses the raised anticipatory rejection in view of the following remarks.

Robinson '010 relates to a sign with photo-luminescent and current-generated lighting. The sign 10 includes a transparent panel 12 having an outwardly facing front surface and an inwardly facing rear surface 17. The sign 10 further includes lettering or characters 22 that are etched into the rear surface 17 of the panel 12, that is, in the interior facing side of the panel 12. To illuminate the characters 22, a light source 14 is aligned adjacent a side wall 13 of the panel 12 along the bottom of the sign 10. With this arrangement, the etched characters 22 are illuminated by light which is emitted from the light source 14, located along the side of the panel 12. From the side, the light is reflected forward through the front surface of the panel 12. At the same time light is reflected rearward to energize the photo-luminescent characters 16. In other words, light is directed from the side of the panel 12 to both the front and the back of the panel 12. To aid in reflecting the light in these directions, a reflective element 26 is located on the side wall opposite the light source 14 along the top of the sign 10.

It is apparent that there are a number of distinctions between the teachings of Robinson '010 and the presently claimed invention. First, the etched characters 22 and consequently the photo-luminescent characters 16 are located on the rear inwardly facing

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surface 17 of the transparent panel 12. That is, on the surface of the panel 17 that faces the interior of the sign. This feature is in direct opposition to the pending claims in which the at least one cavity, and consequently the luminescent epoxy, are located on the exterior outwardly facing surface of the sign plate.

In further opposition to the claims of the application, the light source 14 of Robinson '010, as seen in Figs. 2 and 5, is located on the side of the panel 12 at the bottom of the sign 10. The light emitted from the light source 14 enters the bottom side of the panel 12 and generally passes toward the opposite side of the panel 12. Reflective coatings are applied to the sides of the panel 12 as well as to the rear surface of the luminescent characters 16 to aid in directing light in a useful direction. Placing the light source 14 along the side of the panel 12 is believed to be an inefficient use of light, because only a portion of the light illuminates and charges the luminescent characters 16.

In distinct contrast to the teachings of Robinson '010, the presently claimed invention requires that the light source be located behind the interior or inwardly facing second surface of the sign plate and within the interior of the enclosure. With this arrangement, light radiating from the light source behind the sign plate directly passes through the second surface, not a side surface, and then through the transparent portion of the sign plate toward the luminescent epoxy. This enables the epoxy to not only be charged, but also be illuminated or backlit.

In order to emphasize the above noted distinctions between the presently claimed invention and the applied art, the independent claims 10 and 15 of this application now recite the features of a sign plate made from a single layer of material, having an *exterior first face* and an *interior second face*; at least one *inlaid cavity in the body being located on the exterior first face* and defining one of alpha-numeric indicia or graphic indicia, the cavity extending into the sign plate toward the interior second face a distance substantially midway between the exterior first face and the interior second face of the sign plate," while new independent claim 21 includes the features of "the sign

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plate having an *exterior facing surface* and an *interior facing surface*, and at least one cavity being formed and inlaid in the exterior facing surface and extending substantially midway between the exterior facing surface and the interior facing surface, the at least one cavity defining at least one alpha-numeric indicia, the sign plate having transparent portions only located between the at least one cavity and the interior facing surface, the at least one cavity being filled with a luminescent epoxy such that the luminescent epoxy forms the alpha-numeric indicia defined by the at least one cavity; and the light source *directly illuminating the interior facing surface of the sign plate* such that the light passes through the interior facing surface of the sign plate and then through the luminescent epoxy prior to exiting the sign enclosure". New independent claim 23 recites similar limitations but is slightly more restrictive. The above noted features are believed to clearly and patentably distinguish the presently claimed invention from all of the art of record, including the applied art.

If any further amendment to this application is believed necessary to advance prosecution and place this case in allowable form, the Examiner is courteously solicited to contact the undersigned representative of the Applicant to discuss the same.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the raised rejection should be withdrawn at this time. If the Examiner disagrees with the Applicant's view concerning the withdrawal of the outstanding rejection or applicability of the Robinson '010 reference, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate the specific passage or passages, or the drawing or drawings, which contain the necessary teaching, suggestion and/or disclosure required by case law. As such teaching, suggestion and/or disclosure is not present in the applied references, the raised rejection should be withdrawn at this time. Alternatively, if the Examiner is relying on his/her expertise in this field, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to enter an affidavit substantiating the

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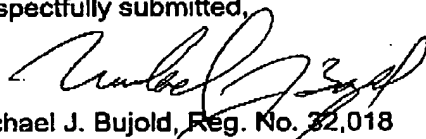
Examiner's position so that suitable contradictory evidence can be entered in this case by the Applicant.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the raised rejection(s) should be withdrawn and this application is now placed in a condition for allowance. Action to that end, in the form of an early Notice of Allowance, is courteously solicited by the Applicant at this time.

The Applicant respectfully requests that any outstanding objection(s) or requirement(s), as to the form of this application, be held in abeyance until allowable subject matter is indicated for this case.

In the event that there are any fee deficiencies or additional fees are payable, please charge the same or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account (Account No. 04-0213).

Respectfully submitted,


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